

10/7/2021

Delilah Erica LumHo

8141 Rondelay Ln., Fairfax Station VA 22039

Honorable Judge Liam O'Grady

Albert V Bryan US Courthouse

401 Courthouse Square, Alexandria VA 22314

Dear Honorable Judge O'Grady,

I am writing to ask you for mercy in the sentencing of my husband, Matthew Kekoa LumHo. Thank you for your willingness to read my letter.

If it is within your ability, I beg that you please keep our family together. Our son, as do all sons, needs his father. Kekoa's arrest, loss of his career and the devastating guilty verdict has forever changed our lives. Although it has been mainly a negative experience we have been able to recognize some good that has come out of all of this.

Our son, Kekoa Quinn LumHo was born May 9, 2011 and it took us 6 years to finally accept that he had learning and behavioral issues that had nothing to do with our parenting (although we blamed ourselves a lot and kept trying to figure out what we were doing wrong). After an intense psychological evaluation, he was diagnosed with severe attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and prone to have dyslexia. We thought he was just a finicky infant when our babysitter said she didn't want to watch him anymore because he was too much to handle at 6 months old. We thought he was just an unruly toddler who was kicked out of daycare at age 3. The daycare center recommended that he have one-on-one care to help him develop and reach the right milestones to be prepared to enter school with others. We did that. We thought he was just a disobedient kindergartener at age 6 after being asked not to return to his Baptist school for being unable to walk a straight line to the cafeteria, for frequently distracting his classmates, and for being unable to sit still or pay attention for any specific amount of time. We had an excessive amount of phone calls from that school to come to the principal's office where he would sit and wait for us to arrive to discipline him before sending him back to class. We did that too. Needless to say that at the end of his kindergarten year he said he hated school and didn't want to go back. With heavy hearts we found a new school and had him repeat kindergarten in the 2017/2018 school year. We also got him medically diagnosed, worked transparently and closely with his new school and doctors, put him on medication, enrolled him in educational therapy and started counseling and behavioral mindfulness. And then in that school year on October 5, 2017, in our home and in front of our son, a new chapter in our lives commenced with the shame and turmoil of Kekoa's arrest, indefinite suspension without pay and absolute disgrace of our family. Despite what we were going through, we did our best to shield and protect our son and help him continue to have normalcy. Kekoa took over all aspects of taking care of our son from

getting him up in the morning, getting his breakfast, dropping him off at school, volunteering in his classroom, picking him up from school, helping him with homework, teaching him about good sportsmanship as he coached his lacrosse team, showing him how to be humble and “making it right” with family and friends by calmly walking through our son’s negative choices and getting to the root of his actions with him, constantly working on showing him how to overcome his impulsive and sometimes destructive behaviors and giving him that one-on-one care that he needed.

Our son was in kindergarten when Kekoa was arrested and is now in the fourth grade. This is the year that students transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” His dyslexia keeps him well behind his classmates reading level and he spends several hours a week out of the classroom in educational therapy to strengthen his learning techniques. This is a big transition year for our son and we are starting to see the pace pick up overall. I’m not sure how this year will end for our son (or any other year for that matter) if Kekoa has to leave us.

As for me, despite our current circumstances, my husband has been a godsend to me, even with the shame of his conviction. I was broken from childhood, and in some ways still am, but he helped me find balance in life over the years teaching me basic life coping skills that I missed out on in my youth. He is a good loving man who takes care of me with gentleness and intentionality. I can’t help but wonder if our sons' struggles stem from my side of the family. I say this because I lived through poverty, family members in prison and overall dysfunction while growing up. Although my single mom raised me the best she knew how, dealing with her own struggles (teenage parent, drug use, violence in our home, no father present yet many other men were), I survived a childhood that no little girl (nor boy) should endure. I decided not to take the same path my brothers and sister took (incarceration), and instead clung onto the possibility of better by joining the military and earning a college degree. I believe I broke the cycle. Yet here I am, shamefully right back in the cycle, with a son who will share in his father’s punishment. I will do my best to raise him on my own if needed but as the good word says, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor [I see this as our son]: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.” Your Honor, there is a reason why my son has flourished these past 4 years under my husband's constant one-on-one care. He is the strength and nucleus of our family. Please have mercy on us.